

Your Parental Leave Rights as a UC POSTDOC



PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH AND ADOPTION

are occasions more apt for celebrating than stressing because you have to work or are worried about losing your health benefits or your job. Unfortunately, before we had a union this kind of stress was all too prevalent for future parents. This stress can negatively affect both Postdocs and the academy.

According to studies by Mary Ann Mason and colleagues at UC Berkeley, more women are obtaining Ph.D.s in science than ever before, but those women — often due to pressures from having a family — are far more likely than men to leave academia before obtaining tenure at a college or university.

Under-representation of women in senior roles has been a longstanding problem within academia, and that's why the significant improvements the union has won are so important.

LEAVE RIGHTS FOR NEW PARENTS:

- There are two kinds of parental leave: Birth parents receive a minimum of eight weeks and, if medically necessary, up to six months of Pregnancy Disability Leave, and all new parents receive up to 12 weeks of Parental Leave. Birth parents can take these two kinds of leaves consecutively, and the leaves can be paid or unpaid. In most cases, UC must provide benefits (for example, health insurance for you and your baby) even if the leave is unpaid. Postdocs whose fellowship or funding source provides for

longer guaranteed parental leave than the contract are entitled to the longer leave.

- Leave can be (fully or partially) paid by using one or more of the following: paid parental leave benefit, Short-Term Disability coverage, Personal Time Off, sick leave, paid leave voluntarily provided by your PI or department, or additional paid parental leave from your fellowship or funding source. For example, individual and institutional NIH NRSA fellowships provide 60 calendar days of parental leave for either parent following an adoption or birth.
- **PAID PARENTAL LEAVE BENEFIT (Article 12):** All Postdocs receive four weeks of parental leave at full pay that can be used within one year of the birth or adoption of a child. The contract allows for various ways to use this leave providing flexibility that allows each Postdoc to shape parental leave to benefit both them and their family.
- **SHORT-TERM DISABILITY (STD) INSURANCE (Article 12):** STD coverage for Pregnancy Disability Leave guarantees a minimum of eight weeks (two weeks before delivery and six weeks after) at 70% salary after a one-week waiting period, which can be paid leave by using five days of sick leave or Personal Time Off. STD benefits at 70% salary can continue beyond six weeks post-partum (up to a total of 180 days) with medical indication.
- **PERSONAL TIME OFF (Article 17):** You can use Personal Time Off (PTO) to earn 100% salary for Pregnancy Disability and Parental Leave. PTO days are "work days" (Mon–Fri, excluding UC holidays).

- **SICK LEAVE (Article 22):** You can use sick days to earn 100% salary for any part of Pregnancy Disability Leave and also for taking care of a sick family member. Sick days are “work days” (Monday–Friday, excluding UC holidays).
- **ADDITIONAL LEAVE PROVIDED BY YOUR FUNDING SOURCE:** Some fellowships or funding agencies include additional or longer periods of paid parental leave than our contract.
- **PAID LEAVE VOLUNTARILY PROVIDED BY YOUR PI:** Nothing in the contract prohibits your PI from providing more paid parental leave than what is required by the contract.
- **REDUCED WORK SCHEDULE/TEMPORARY REASSIGNMENT/MODIFICATION OF DUTIES (Article 12):** If you are pregnant, you can request a reduced work schedule, temporary reassignment, or modification of duties to be less strenuous and hazardous.
- **NON-DISCRIMINATION (Article 15):** UC may not discriminate against you for being pregnant or for taking parental leave. These protections were won through hard-fought struggle. If you feel that you are facing any kind of discrimination, contact the union immediately.

LOGISTICS OF TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE:

These are general recommendations. Contact the union for advice on or questions about how to best tailor the rights secured in the contract to your situation.

- **Before Your Leave Begins:**
 - Plan the mix of paid parental leave benefit, Short-Term Disability coverage, Personal Time Off, sick leave, unpaid leave, modified duties, etc. that works best for you.

- When appropriate, notify your PI (and funding agency if applicable) that you will be taking a leave and discuss when you are likely to stop and return to work. If applicable, discuss modified duties or reassignment.
- Complete the STD Claim Form (available at https://clients.garnett-powers.com/pd/uc/downloads/std_claim_form.pdf) with information from you, your department, and your doctor. Submit completed form to The Standard Insurance by creating an account and choosing File A Claim at <https://login.standard.com/register>
- Make arrangements with Human Resources regarding the mix of paid parental leave benefit, Short-Term Disability coverage, Personal Time Off, sick leave, etc. that you will be using. Confirm that UC will continue to provide health insurance while you are on leave.

- **During Your Leave:**

- Notify your department and PI when you start your leave.
- Inform your department and PI of any changes in your leave plans.
- Add your new child to your benefits coverage within 31 days of birth or adoption by filling out the enrollment form at the Garnett-Powers site (https://clients.garnett-powers.com/pd/uc/downloads/std_claim_form.pdf) then give the enrollment form to your payroll administrator.

- **Returning to Work:**

- If necessary, have your physician certify your return to work.
- Notify your department and PI that you are back.
- If you are on a modified work schedule, complete the appropriate paperwork.